A Satyam Roychowdhury initiative

ROLE OF ONLINE DATING APPLICATION USERS AND NON USERS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AND INTERPERSONAL COMMITMENT AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

This dissertation is submitted for the partial fulfillment for the degree of

M.SC IN APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (SPECIALIZATION IN REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGY)

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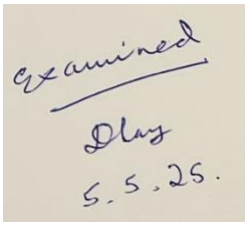
Work under supervision of



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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Role of online dating application users and non users on Psychological Wellbeing and Interpersonal Commitment among young adults" submitted by Debani Dhal, a 2nd year M.Sc student in Rehabilitation Psychology, Sister Nivedita University, is as bonafied work, which may be placed before the board of examiners for their evaluation. This is in partial fulfillment for the Degree of M.Sc in Rehabilitation Psychology, Sister Nivedita University.

This is an original study done by the candidate and has not been submitted by her before any form for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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"I, DEBANI DHAL, hereby declare that the research work titled, "Role of online dating application users and non-users on Psychological Wellbeing and Interpersonal Commitment among young adults", conducted by me, has been completed with full honesty and integrity. I confirm that the work is original, and all sources of information have been appropriately acknowledged and cited. Furthermore, I affirm that the research work has undergone thorough plagiarism checks to ensure its authenticity. I take full responsibility for the content and findings presented in this research."

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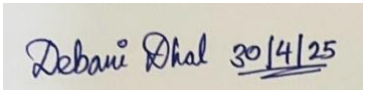

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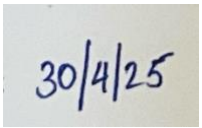

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Online dating applications have caused a shift in how young adults view relationships, leading to questions about their psychological and relational consequences. The expansion of connection options on these platforms has raised concerns about their impact on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment.

Aim: By comparing the users and non-users of online dating applications on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment among 18 to 25 year olds, taking into account possible gender differences and interaction effects.

Methods: 80 participants, consisting of 40 users (20 male users and 20 female users) and 40 non-users (20 male non-users and 20 female non-users), were randomly selected in a mixed-methods approach. Ryff utilized the Psychological Wellbeing Scale to evaluate six dimensions of wellbeing (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self-acceptance), and the Interpersonal Commitment Scale measured commitment across three dimensions: commitment in friendship, relationship and family. Two-way ANOVA and independent samples t-tests were employed to analyze the data.

Results: The scores of non-users were significantly elevated in five dimensions of psychological well-being, including autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance, as well as greater levels of interpersonal commitment in relationships and friendships. There were few gender differences, however, with males more in self-accepting than females. Significant interaction effects between gender and dating app use were observed, with one notable exception being the influence on environmental mastery and commitment to relationships.

Conclusion: Online dating appears to be associated with a lower level of psychological wellbeing, possibly due to an overemphasis on choice, reliance on external validation and the displacement of relationship. However, Future longitudinal studies with different populations are necessary to further investigate the changing effects of technology-based connections.

Keywords: *Online dating, psychological wellbeing, interpersonal commitment, gender differences, online dating application*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology in the contemporary world has immensely changed the nature of human interaction, especially in the context of romantic and social relationships. The spread of the internet and mobile technology has led to online dating becoming a common way for people to meet their potential partners. Applications like Tinder, Bumble, and OkCupid have become extremely popular, allowing users to connect with one another based on location, interests, and preference. Although these applications provide various benefits in the form of ease of access and convenience, they have also questioned their effects on psychological health and the nature of interpersonal commitments (Finkel et al., 2012).

1.1 Definition and Characteristics of Online Dating

Online dating is the practice of using internet-based platforms—such as websites, mobile apps, or social networking services—to find and form romantic or sexual relationships (Finkel et al., 2012). These platforms generally allow users to create personal profiles, explore others' profiles, and start conversations using various communication tools available within the service. Since its early days, online dating has changed dramatically, evolving from simple text-based ads to advanced algorithmic matching systems and location-based mobile apps that enable quick connections (Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2019). Today's online dating landscape features a wide range of platforms designed for different demographics, relationship goals, and social niches. These include popular services like Match.com, eHarmony, and Tinder, as well as specialized platforms that cater to specific religious groups, age ranges, sexual orientations, or relationship preferences (Hogan et al., 2011). This technological approach to selecting romantic and sexual partners marks a significant change in how people start and nurture intimate relationships in the digital era.

1.2 History of Online Dating

The history of online dating dates back to the early 1960s when the first computer-based matchmaking services were introduced. However, the real beginnings of modern online dating can be traced to the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the rise of bulletin board systems and early internet forums (Sprecher, 2009). The mid-1990s saw the launch of the first dedicated online dating websites, with Match.com debuting in 1995, marking a pivotal moment in the industry (Finkel et al., 2012). In the early 2000s, the online dating scene expanded rapidly with the launch of platforms like eHarmony (2000) and OkCupid (2004), which focused on compatibility algorithms and in-depth personality assessments. The landscape changed dramatically with the smartphone revolution and the introduction of Tinder in 2012, which popularized the "swipe" feature that has become a standard in mobile dating apps (Sumter et al., 2017). This shift towards mobile platforms and user-friendly interfaces made online dating more accessible and integrated it into the everyday digital lives of millions around the globe. In recent years, there has been even more diversification with the rise of niche dating apps catering to specific interests and preferences, along with the incorporation of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and augmented reality (Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of virtual dating, prompting many platforms to introduce video dating features to meet social distancing needs (Dewitte et al., 2021).

1.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Dating

Online dating provides a variety of advantages for those looking for romantic or sexual relationships. One of the main benefits is the access to a much larger pool of potential partners, extending beyond one's immediate social or geographical boundaries (Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2019). This broader access is especially beneficial for individuals with particular partner preferences or those belonging to demographic minorities (Potarca, 2021). The asynchronous nature of communication in online dating allows users to thoughtfully curate their self-presentation and responses, which can help alleviate the anxiety often linked to in-person interactions (Tong et al., 2020). Additionally, many platforms utilize algorithmic matching based on psychological principles, which may enhance the chances of finding compatible partners (Finkel et al., 2012), although the effectiveness of these algorithms is still a topic of debate in academic circles. Moreover, online dating is generally more convenient and efficient

than traditional dating methods, enabling users to filter potential partners according to specific criteria and conduct preliminary screenings before committing to face-to-face meetings (Sharabi & Caughlin, 2017).

While online dating offers many benefits, it also comes with its own set of challenges and drawbacks. The sheer number of options can create "choice overload," making it hard to commit to one partner and leading to a constant search for potentially better matches (D'Angelo & Toma, 2017). The focus on physical appearance, especially in swipe-based apps, can promote superficial judgments and set unrealistic expectations (Sevi et al., 2018). Another major issue is misrepresentation; studies show that while deception in online dating profiles is common, it is usually minor (Toma & Hancock, 2012). Safety concerns, such as privacy risks, catfishing, and the possibility of harassment, continue to be significant problems in the online dating world (Burgess et al., 2021). Furthermore, the commodification of romantic relationships—viewing potential partners as products to be compared and chosen—has drawn criticism for possibly undermining the traditional processes of relationship development (Heino et al., 2010).

1.4 Duration of using Online Dating which can be considered

Research shows that the time people spend on online dating platforms can vary widely. On average, users typically engage with a dating app for about 3 to 6 months before either finding a partner or leaving the platform out of frustration or dating fatigue (Hobbs et al., 2017). However, this timeframe can differ significantly depending on factors like demographics, relationship goals, and the specific dating services used. Longitudinal studies reveal that around 30% of users manage to find a relationship within a year of using online dating services, while others may go through cycles of active use followed by periods of inactivity (Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). Research focused on specific platforms indicates that swipe-based apps like Tinder generally have shorter usage periods, averaging 2 to 3 months, compared to profile-based services such as Match.com or eHarmony, which average around 4 to 7 months (Sumter et al., 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic has notably changed these trends, with many users prolonging their online interactions before meeting in person, which may lead to deeper emotional connections prior to face-to-face meetings (Dewitte et al., 2021).

Spending a lot of time on online dating platforms can lead to various psychological effects. Research indicates that users may become more sensitive to rejection as they face frequent dismissals or no responses from potential matches (Pronk & Denissen, 2020). Some studies have found links between heavy dating app usage and increased levels of social anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem in certain groups (Holtzhausen et al., 2020). On the flip side, using these platforms in a positive way can boost self-confidence and improve social skills, especially for those who have had difficulties with traditional dating (Timmermans & Courtois, 2018). Additionally, the connection between personality traits and online dating behavior shows that extroverted individuals tend to be more active on these platforms, while those with high levels of neuroticism may feel more stressed during the experience (Blackhart et al., 2014).

1.5 What affects the personality of an individual who use Online Dating applications

The rise of online dating has the potential to significantly change how relationships are formed and maintained today. Studies exploring the differences between relationships that start online versus those that begin offline have shown mixed findings. However, some research indicates that relationships initiated online might experience higher levels of initial satisfaction and stability (Cacioppo et al., 2013). A major concern surrounding online dating is its potential to facilitate extramarital affairs or infidelity. Research suggests that around 18-25% of users on certain dating platforms are already in committed relationships (Alexopoulos et al., 2020). It remains uncertain whether online dating technologies actually increase rates of infidelity or simply offer a new avenue for behaviors that would have happened anyway. Recent studies indicate that the acceptance of having multiple potential partners during the online dating experience may affect expectations of commitment and exclusivity in future relationships (LeFebvre et al., 2020). Furthermore, the quick pace of matching, meeting, and breaking up may lead users to expect shorter relationship durations and a lower tolerance for challenges in their relationships (Sharabi, 2021).

1.6 Does it affects an individual’s personal relations with others?

This seeks to investigate the various implications of online dating on individual psychology and relationship dynamics in today's society. By employing a mixed-methods approach that

includes survey data, in-depth interviews, and an analysis of user interactions on dating platforms, this study aims to fill several important gaps in our current understanding: - How prolonged use of online dating platforms influences users' expectations in relationships, their communication styles, and their behaviors regarding commitment. - The connection between particular online dating practices and outcomes related to psychological well-being. - The possible effects of online dating technologies on fidelity and the maintenance of relationships. Gaining insight into these dynamics is crucial for relationship counseling, the design of digital platforms, and public health initiatives aimed at enhancing relationship well-being in the digital era. As online dating continues to transform the way romantic and sexual relationships are formed, thorough empirical research is vital for guiding individual users, relationship experts, and platform developers toward fostering healthy relationship outcomes.

1.7 About Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological well-being is used to refer to the emotional and mental status of an individual that includes the overall happiness with life and the capacity to handle difficulties. Ryff and Keyes (1995) offered a model of psychological wellbeing comprising six primary dimensions: self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others. These dimensions cumulatively delineate an individual's general psychological health and life satisfaction. Research has identified earlier that the interpersonal relationship quality, including romantic, friendship, and familial relationships, contributes importantly to psychological wellbeing (Keyes, 2002).

1.8 Psychological wellbeing in relation to Online Dating usage

The connection between online dating and psychological health has been a subject of growing research interest in more recent works. Although there are studies proposing that online dating sites can lead to positive emotional states through meaningful connections, there are other claims that the superficiality of most online interactions could result in dissatisfaction or lower self-esteem (Finkel et al., 2012; Utz, 2016). This research will examine the ways in which online dating impacts these aspects of psychological well-being, especially compared to those who do not use such sites.

1.9 About Interpersonal Commitment and its domains

Interpersonal commitment is used to describe someone's emotional attachment and commitment towards keeping up relations with others. Rusbult's Investment Model (1983) suggests that commitment in the relationship is impacted by satisfaction of the relationship, quality of the alternatives, and the personal investment. The three main subdomains where this aspect can be delved into more are friendship, romantic relationships, and family.

Friendship: The vow of friendship is marked by respect for one another, emotional support, and trust. Friendships are important in improving psychological well-being, providing individuals with a source of social support and ground for personal development (Demir et al., 2007).

Relationship: Romantic relationship commitment entails deeper emotional connections, loyalty, and long-term intentions. Romantic commitment is usually accompanied by higher emotional satisfaction, but also by distress when unmet expectations or dissatisfaction with the relationship (Berscheid, 2010).

Family: Family commitment is most commonly marked by unconditional support and long-term involvement. The emotional security provided by family relations plays a key role in defining an individual's identity and psychological stability (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

1.10 Theoretical Background of Interpersonal Commitment

Interpersonal commitment is underpinned by several theoretical models, such as attachment theory and the Investment Model. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) suggests that early interactions with caregivers influence the attachment style of an individual, which in turn affects their future relationships. Secure attachment is usually linked to healthy, stable relationships, whereas insecure attachment styles (anxious or avoidant) can result in challenges in developing long-term commitments. The Investment Model, as described by Rusbult (1983), identifies the variables that lead to commitment in relationships, such as satisfaction, alternatives, and investment in the relationship.

1.11 If having or not having interpersonal commitment what personality characteristics affects an individual?

Personality traits are also an important factor in determining how people approach relationships and make interpersonal commitments. Emotional intelligence, empathy, and self-esteem have been known to influence relationship quality and long-term commitment (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). For example, people with greater emotional intelligence are better at handling relationship difficulties and strong interpersonal relationships (Brackett et al., 2006). Likewise, attachment style and personality factors like agreeableness and conscientiousness determine how individuals approach romantic and non-romantic relationships.

This study will investigate how the use of online dating apps influences individuals' psychological wellbeing and their interpersonal commitment across various relationship domains, including friendships, romantic relationships, and family. By comparing users and non-users of these platforms, the research seeks to understand how engaging with online dating impacts individuals' emotional health and their ability to form and maintain meaningful connections with others.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The rise of online dating platforms has significantly changed how people start romantic relationships in the 21st century. What started as niche websites in the late 1990s has now transformed into advanced mobile applications that are deeply integrated into modern social practices (Finkel et al., 2012). As of 2024, around 30% of adults have tried online dating services, with that number climbing to nearly 50% among those under 30 (Smith & Anderson, 2023). This widespread use calls for a careful look at how these platforms affect users' mental health and their ability to commit to relationships. By comparing these aspects between users and non-users, we aim to offer a thorough understanding of how technology-driven romance impacts psychological and relational outcomes. The review is structured into three main sections:

(2.1) Developments in Online Dating Research,

(2.2) The Impact of Online Dating on Interpersonal Relationships,

(2.3) The Relationship Between Online Dating and Psychological Wellbeing.

2.1 Online Dating Research Developments

2.1.1 Evolutionary Trajectory of Online Dating Platforms:

The technological evolution of online dating platforms has been matched by advancements in research methodologies and theoretical frameworks. The launch of Tinder in 2012 marked a pivotal change from traditional website-based services to mobile applications featuring simplified interfaces and geolocation capabilities (Sumter et al., 2017). This shift sparked a surge of interest in "swipe-based" dating and its psychological effects. Initially, research relied heavily on surveys and self-report measures to explore the motivations behind online dating usage. LeFebvre (2018) identified six key motivations for using Tinder: entertainment, seeking relationships, sexual experiences, self-validation, ease of communication, and trendiness. This multifaceted approach to understanding user motivations has had a lasting impact, although research methods have become more advanced over time. After 2015,

computational social science methods gained prominence, with researchers analyzing extensive datasets from dating platforms.

Tyson et al. (2016) performed a quantitative analysis of the behaviors of 230,000 male and female Tinder users, uncovering notable gender differences in messaging strategies and match rates. Their research revealed that men matched with only 0.6% of the women they liked, while women matched with 10.5% of the men they liked, highlighting significant disparities in the online dating landscape. The role of algorithms in mate selection has emerged as a key area of research.

Brozovsky and Petricek (2017) examined how recommendation algorithms on dating sites affect user choices and satisfaction, discovering that these algorithmic suggestions often reinforced existing preferences rather than expanding options. This "filter bubble" phenomenon has been further explored by Halaburda et al. (2021), who created mathematical models illustrating how dating app algorithms can enhance matching efficiency while also limiting diversity.

2.1.2 Methodological Advances and Challenges:

The variety of methodological approaches has grown significantly, with researchers now using mixed-methods designs that blend digital ethnography, log data analysis, and psychological assessments. For instance, Ward (2017) carried out an 18-month ethnographic study of Tinder users in Manchester, offering valuable qualitative insights into how individuals incorporate dating apps into their daily lives and social interactions. In a similar vein, Hobbs et al. (2017) conducted in-depth interviews with 75 dating app users in Australia, revealing how these technologies both reinforce and challenge traditional dating norms. After 2018, longitudinal research designs became more common, enabling researchers to observe changes in psychological well-being and relationship development over time. Timmermans and Courtois (2018) tracked 404 dating app users for a year, discovering that around 18% formed long-term relationships, while others experienced cycles of heavy use, disillusionment, and re-engagement. This "cycle of disillusionment" has been noted by various researchers and highlights an important temporal aspect of online dating experiences (Sharabi, 2021). Experimental designs have also been utilized to explore causal links between app features and psychological outcomes. Strubel and Petrie (2017) conducted a randomized controlled trial that manipulated users' exposure to different dating app interfaces, showing that even short interactions with these platforms can lead to a temporary decline in body

satisfaction, especially among male users. These results indicate that the visual focus of dating apps may have immediate psychological effects. Despite these methodological advancements, there are still significant challenges. Self-selection biases continue to be an issue, as individuals with negative experiences often stop using the apps and become unavailable for research (Zhang & Yasseri, 2016). Furthermore, platform companies have increasingly restricted data access, hindering researchers' ability to perform large-scale analyses. These limitations have led to innovative methodological strategies, such as the implementation of simulated dating environments and vignette-based experimental designs (Pronk & Denissen, 2020).

2.1.3 Theoretical Frameworks:

Theoretical frameworks for understanding online dating have progressed from using traditional relationship theories to creating specialized conceptual models. Attachment theory has been notably applied, with Chin et al. (2019) discovering that individuals with anxious attachment styles tend to engage more heavily with dating apps and experience greater emotional fluctuations during their use. Social exchange theory has also been useful, as demonstrated by Abramova et al. (2016), who explored how users weigh potential costs and benefits when deciding to reach out or reply to messages. Several researchers have crafted unique theoretical frameworks. The "Liquid Love" concept introduced by Bauman (2003) and later adapted to dating apps by Hobbs et al. (2017) posits that these platforms encourage a consumer-oriented approach to relationships, marked by lower commitment and greater disposability. In a similar vein, the "Choice Overload" hypothesis has been utilized by D'Angelo and Toma (2017), suggesting that the sheer number of potential partners on dating apps can ironically lead to decreased satisfaction with the partners chosen. More recently, the "Affordance" approach has gained traction. Davis and Chouinard (2016) applied this framework to dating apps, investigating how particular technological features (such as geolocation and a focus on photographs) influence user behaviors and experiences. This approach has been further refined by MacLeod and McArthur (2019), who highlighted how the design elements of dating apps create distinct "interaction rituals" that differ markedly from those found in traditional dating scenarios.

2.2 Interpersonal Relationships Affected by Online Dating

2.2.1 Relationship Formation and Development:

Research on how relationships formed through dating apps evolve compared to those that start offline has produced varied results. Cacioppo et al. (2013) conducted a nationwide survey of 19,131 Americans who married between 2005 and 2012. They found that marriages that began online were slightly less likely to end in separation or divorce (6% compared to 7.6%) and reported marginally higher levels of marital satisfaction. However, this study was conducted before mobile dating apps became widely popular. More recent studies have focused on specific relational dynamics in relationships that start online. Sharabi and Caughlin (2017) explored the shift from online to offline dating, discovering that seeking more information before meeting helped reduce uncertainty, although it sometimes led to decreased attraction due to unrealistic expectations. Their follow-up study (Sharabi, 2019) indicated that online-initiated relationships often developed strategies for switching communication modes, moving between text, voice, video, and in-person interactions based on what the relationship required. Experimental research has provided causal insights into how relationships develop. Sprecher et al. (2018) examined relationship growth across three different communication methods: text-only, video, and in-person. They found that while attraction tended to develop more slowly in text-based interactions, these relationships eventually reached similar levels of intimacy and commitment as those formed face-to-face, albeit taking longer to get there.

The concepts of "ghosting" (suddenly stopping communication) and "breadcrumbing" (sending sporadic messages to keep someone interested without making a commitment) have garnered considerable attention in research. LeFebvre et al. (2019) conducted a survey with 554 adults regarding their experiences with ghosting, revealing that 25.3% had been ghosted and 21.7% had ghosted others on dating apps. Their qualitative analysis indicated that many justified this behaviour as a way to avoid confrontation, even though those on the receiving end often faced significant emotional distress. This study underscores how the features of dating apps enable relationship breakdowns that would be more challenging in traditional dating scenarios.

2.2.2 Commitment Processes and Patterns:

Commitment processes appear to be distinctly affected by online dating platform usage. Pronk and Denissen (2020) compared commitment levels between relationships initiated through dating apps versus traditional means, finding that app-initiated relationships reported lower initial commitment levels but similar commitment after six months. They proposed a "slow-burn commitment" model wherein technology-mediated relationships may develop commitment more gradually but ultimately reach similar levels.

Several studies have examined how the perceived abundance of alternatives on dating apps influences commitment processes. Toma and Hancock (2012) experimentally manipulated participants' perceptions of dating market size, finding that those who believed they had access to many potential partners demonstrated decreased commitment to current relationships. This supports Rusbult's (1980) investment model prediction that perception of alternatives negatively impacts commitment.

The concept of "relationshopping" emerged as an influential framework, with Heino et al. (2010) describing how online dating encourages treating potential partners as products to be evaluated against competitors. This marketplace mentality has been further examined by Hobbs et al. (2017), who found that many participants simultaneously valued the efficiency of dating apps while expressing discomfort with the commodification of relationships they facilitated.

Research has also focused on how to maintain relationships. Tong et al. (2020) examined communication patterns in relationships that began through apps compared to those formed offline. They discovered that relationships initiated through apps tended to have more frequent but shorter interactions and showed lower levels of self-disclosure on sensitive subjects. The authors proposed that the casual communication styles developed during app usage might carry over into the relationship's growth, which could influence the development of intimacy.

2.2.3 Relational Satisfaction and Quality:

Research on relationship quality and satisfaction has produced some interesting insights. Potarca (2021) looked at data from a nationally representative survey of 3,245 partnered individuals in Switzerland and discovered that couples who met through dating apps reported levels of relationship satisfaction comparable to those who met through other avenues. However, those who connected via dating apps expressed stronger intentions to cohabit, indicating that these relationships might reach certain commitment milestones more rapidly.

Several studies have focused on specific aspects of relationship quality. Carter and Duncan (2017) found that couples who met through dating apps experienced higher sexual satisfaction but lower emotional intimacy during the first six months of their relationship compared to those who met through friends or in person. Nevertheless, these differences seemed to fade after a year, suggesting that they are more about timing than lasting disparities.

Finkel's (2018) important research suggested that online dating has significantly changed how people view relationships, promoting a "soulmate" concept that focuses on finding the ideal partner instead of developing a bond through shared experiences. This viewpoint indicates that online dating might lead to lower resilience in relationships, especially when partners fail to meet these lofty expectations. Supporting this idea, Slotter and Gardner (2019) discovered that individuals who frequently used dating apps showed less patience for their partner's flaws and were more inclined to express dissatisfaction in their relationships after experiencing behavioral issues.

Studies on relationship stability have looked into whether the context in which couples meet affects their longevity. Thomas et al. (2021) carried out a five-year longitudinal study involving 2,658 couples and found that meeting through dating apps, compared to other settings, did not significantly influence the likelihood of relationship breakdowns after accounting for demographic variables. However, they did observe that relationships that began on dating apps exhibited more erratic satisfaction patterns, with greater variations in reported relationship quality.

2.3 Online Dating and Psychological Wellbeing

2.3.1 Self-Esteem and Self-Concept:

The connection between dating app usage and self-esteem has been a significant focus of research. Strubel and Petrie (2017) conducted a survey with 1,044 young adults in the U.S. and discovered that Tinder users tended to have lower satisfaction with their facial and body appearance, as well as a higher tendency to compare their looks to others compared to non-users. This trend was especially evident among male users, which challenges the common belief that appearance pressures mainly impact women in dating scenarios.

Experimental studies have shown a causal link between dating app usage and self-esteem. Wang et al. (2022) assigned participants to either a dating app or a non-dating social media platform for two weeks. They found that those using dating apps experienced more significant fluctuations in their self-esteem, which directly correlated with the feedback they received from potential matches. This indicates that dating apps foster a reliance on external validation for self-worth.

Additionally, several studies have explored how rejection sensitivity affects dating app usage. Zytko et al. (2018) found that individuals who are highly sensitive to rejection reported more negative emotional experiences from using dating apps, yet they paradoxically tended to engage with these platforms more frequently. The researchers proposed that the less immediate nature of rejection in online settings might make these apps both attractive and potentially detrimental for those who are sensitive to rejection.

Research on self-objectification indicates that using dating apps is linked to heightened body surveillance and concerns about appearance. Toma and Hancock (2018) discovered that individuals who frequently use dating apps tend to score higher on self-objectification measures and are more inclined to engage in behaviors aimed at enhancing their appearance, such as choosing flattering photos or contemplating cosmetic surgery. These trends were noted across all genders but were particularly evident among women and sexual minority men.

The idea of "personal brand management" has been explored in various studies. Ward (2017) conducted qualitative interviews with dating app users and found that many treated self-presentation like a marketing strategy, carefully curating their profiles to attract the partners they desired. This commodification of the self was linked to increased awareness of appearance and a sense of fragmented identity for some participants.

2.3.2 Psychological Distress:

Research on the connections between dating app usage and psychological distress has produced varied results. Holtzhausen et al. (2020) conducted a survey with 1,387 young adults in Australia and discovered that those who frequently used dating apps experienced higher levels of psychological distress, loneliness, and anxiety compared to those who did not use these apps. However, the impact of app usage was influenced by the reasons for using

them; individuals who sought validation or aimed to alleviate social anxiety reported more negative experiences than those who used apps mainly for seeking relationships or for entertainment.

Multiple studies have looked into the links with specific mental health issues. Lenton-Brym et al. (2021) found that people with social anxiety were more inclined to use dating apps in a problematic way, exhibiting compulsive checking behaviors and experiencing negative emotions when they did not receive messages. Similarly, Hawi and Samaha (2017) identified a correlation between problematic dating app usage and symptoms of depression, although the direction of this relationship is still uncertain.

Longitudinal research has provided stronger evidence regarding temporal relationships. Koval et al. (2023) conducted a 12-month study involving 652 young adults, discovering that the use of dating apps predicted an increase in depressive symptoms over time, but this was only true for users who primarily sought validation rather than genuine connection. In contrast, those who used apps with the intention of forming relationships experienced improved psychological wellbeing when their interactions were meaningful.

Research on minority stress has explored how dating apps may impact LGBTQ+ individuals differently. Goedel et al. (2020) surveyed 580 gay and bisexual men and found that while dating apps offered valuable opportunities for connection, experiences of rejection based on race, body type, or HIV status were prevalent and linked to psychological distress. These findings underscore how dating apps can be both a source of support and a source of stress for marginalized communities.

Several studies have investigated the relationship between dating app usage and body image issues. Anderson et al. (2020) found that using dating apps was linked to increased symptoms of eating disorders in both men and women, with this connection influenced by sensitivity to appearance-based rejection. These results suggest that the visual focus of dating apps may particularly impact users who already have body image concerns.

2.3.3 Positive Psychological Outcomes:

While much research has highlighted the potential downsides, several studies have also pointed out the positive psychological effects of using dating apps. Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017) discovered that successful dating experiences through these platforms were

linked to greater social connectedness and a decrease in feelings of loneliness, especially among those with limited offline social circles. In a follow-up study (Timmermans et al., 2019), they found that even users who didn't establish romantic relationships often formed friendships and casual connections that enhanced their social wellbeing.

The research on empowerment has produced some intriguing insights. Newett et al. (2018) interviewed women who used dating apps and found that many felt a greater sense of dating agency and control compared to traditional dating scenarios. Participants appreciated the ability to screen potential partners before committing emotional energy and to establish clear boundaries regarding communication and meeting plans. However, these feelings of empowerment were often accompanied by worries about objectification and harassment.

Multiple studies have explored the advantages of dating apps for certain groups. For instance, Morris et al. (2019) discovered that older adults (65+) who engaged with dating apps experienced less loneliness and a greater sense of social connection compared to their peers who did not use these platforms. In a similar vein, Orosz et al. (2018) found that people living in remote areas felt that dating apps greatly broadened their dating possibilities and alleviated feelings of isolation due to their location.

Research on identity exploration has highlighted several potential developmental benefits. Sumter and Vandenbosch (2019) discovered that young adults frequently utilized dating apps as venues for identity exploration and sexual self-discovery. Their mixed-methods study indicated that around 30% of participants appreciated dating apps mainly for self-discovery rather than for forming relationships, implying that these platforms may fulfill significant developmental roles beyond their original intent.

Improved communication skills have been recognized as another possible advantage. Sharabi and Timmermans (2021) examined the communication styles of dating app users versus non-users, discovering that frequent app users showed more ease with self-disclosure and were better at expressing their relationship expectations. These improved communication abilities seemed to carry over into offline situations, which could positively impact relationship development overall.

2.3.4 Multifactor approach in relation to online dating:

Research has increasingly focused on understanding the factors that influence the relationship between dating app usage and psychological outcomes. Personality traits have been identified as important moderators. For instance, Orosz et al. (2018) discovered that individuals with high levels of neuroticism tended to experience more negative emotional reactions to their dating app experiences, whereas those who scored high in extroversion reported more positive outcomes and a greater likelihood of forming relationships.

Motivations for using dating apps also play a crucial role as moderators. Timmermans and De Caluwé (2017) found that users primarily seeking relationships experienced more favorable psychological outcomes compared to those using apps for self-validation or out of boredom. Similarly, Sumter et al. (2017) noted that users motivated by love reported higher wellbeing, while those seeking validation experienced increased distress.

Several studies have looked into how gender and sexual orientation affect psychological outcomes. Moreno et al. (2020) found that heterosexual women reported more experiences of harassment but also had more successful relationships than heterosexual men. In contrast, LGBTQ+ users expressed higher overall satisfaction with dating apps compared to their heterosexual counterparts. These findings indicate that dating apps may fulfill different roles and have varying psychological effects across different demographic groups.

Age has become another important factor in moderating online dating experiences. Chan (2019) examined outcomes across different age groups and discovered that older adults (45+) reported more positive experiences and greater success in relationships compared to younger users, even though they used the platforms less often. The researcher noted that older adults typically approached online dating with clearer intentions and more realistic expectations than their younger counterparts.

Additionally, digital literacy and self-presentation skills have been recognized as key moderators. Fullwood and Attrill-Smith (2018) found that individuals with higher digital literacy experienced more positive outcomes and fewer negative psychological effects, indicating that education on how to use these platforms effectively and safely could be advantageous.

Summary

This review has compiled research from the last fifteen years that explores the connections between online dating app usage, psychological wellbeing, and interpersonal commitment. Several important themes have surfaced that deserve further integration and discussion.

Firstly, the literature shows significant variability in both usage patterns and outcomes. Instead of yielding universally positive or negative effects, dating apps seem to interact with individual traits, motivations for use, and contextual factors to create a range of outcomes. This variability underscores the need to move past simplistic inquiries about whether dating apps are "good" or "bad" for wellbeing, and instead focus on more nuanced investigations into who benefits, when, and under what conditions these platforms lead to positive or negative results.

Secondly, the timing of usage plays a vital role in understanding psychological and relational outcomes. Cross-sectional studies have frequently found negative correlations between dating app usage and wellbeing, while longitudinal research has uncovered more intricate patterns where initial negative effects may lessen over time or fluctuate based on different phases of usage. This indicates that the psychological effects of dating apps could be cyclical rather than fixed, with users experiencing both positive and negative effects at different times.

The literature indicates that dating apps might be changing how relationships develop, rather than just speeding them up or slowing them down. Various studies have pointed out unique relationship paths for those formed through technology, which feature different speeds, communication styles, and levels of commitment compared to relationships that develop in more traditional ways. These insights imply that we may need new theoretical frameworks to grasp how relationships are formed today, rather than relying on older models.

Additionally, the research underscores the conflict between personal choice and structural limitations in online dating. Although dating apps seem to offer more options and control, factors like algorithmic filtering, the design of the platforms, and ongoing social inequalities influence who truly benefits from these technologies. This conflict between empowerment and limitation is a crucial area for future exploration.

Moreover, there are ongoing methodological challenges in the literature. Issues such as self-selection biases, dependence on self-reported data, and difficulties in obtaining representative samples continue to hinder the quality of research. Future investigations could gain from

employing a wider range of methods, including observational studies, experience sampling techniques, and analysis of platform data when it is accessible.

There are also several notable gaps in the existing literature that need to be addressed. Research on long-term relationship outcomes is scarce, with few studies following relationships past the first year. Furthermore, much of the existing research has concentrated on young, urban populations in Western countries, which limits the applicability of findings to other cultural and geographical contexts. Studies that explore how dating app usage intersects with significant life changes, such as divorce or moving to a new location, are also largely missing.

This review indicates that online dating apps have intricate and varied effects on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment. Instead of having a one-size-fits-all impact, these platforms seem to enhance existing personal tendencies and interact with contextual elements to create a range of outcomes. As dating apps keep evolving and become more integrated into how relationships are formed, ongoing research is crucial to grasp their effects on psychological and relational wellbeing.

3. METHOD

3.1 Aim of the Study: The primary aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment patterns among users and non-users of online dating applications in young adults aged 18-25 years. The study seeks to understand how engagement with digital dating platforms may be associated with various dimensions of psychological functioning and commitment across different interpersonal domains.

3.2 Objectives:

i. To assess and compare the dimensions of psychological wellbeing between users and non-users of online dating applications.

ii. To examine interpersonal commitment patterns (friendship, family, and romantic relationships) among users and non-users of online dating applications.

iii. To analyze gender differences in psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment among users and non-users of online dating applications.

iv. To explore the interaction effect between gender and dating app usage on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment.

3.3 Hypotheses:

$H_0$1: There is no significant differences in psychological wellbeing [(i) Autonomy, ii) Environmental Mastery, iii) Personal Growth, iv) Positive Relations, v) Purpose in Life and vi) Self-Acceptance] and interpersonal commitment [i) friendship, ii) family, and iii) romantic relationship] between male and female young adults irrespective of online dating applications usage.

$H_1$1: There is a significant differences in psychological wellbeing [(i) Autonomy, ii) Environmental Mastery, iii) Personal Growth, iv) Positive Relations, v) Purpose in Life and vi) Self-Acceptance] and interpersonal commitment [i) friendship, ii) family, and iii) romantic

relationship] between male and female young adults irrespective of online dating applications usage.

$H_0$2: There is no significant differences in psychological wellbeing [[(i) Autonomy, ii) Environmental Mastery, iii) Personal Growth, iv) Positive Relations, v) Purpose in Life and vi) Self-Acceptance] and interpersonal commitment [i) friendship, ii) family, and iii) romantic relationship] for different levels of online dating (users vs. non-users).

$H_1$2: There is a significant differences in psychological wellbeing [[(i) Autonomy, ii) Environmental Mastery, iii) Personal Growth, iv) Positive Relations, v) Purpose in Life and vi) Self-Acceptance] and interpersonal commitment [i) friendship, ii) family, and iii) romantic relationship] for different levels of online dating (users vs. non-users).

$H_0$3: There is no significant differences in psychological wellbeing [[(i) Autonomy, ii) Environmental Mastery, iii) Personal Growth, iv) Positive Relations, v) Purpose in Life and vi) Self-Acceptance] and interpersonal commitment [i) friendship, ii) family, and iii) romantic relationship] across genders irrespective of online dating application usage.

$H_1$3: There is a significant differences in psychological wellbeing [[(i) Autonomy, ii) Environmental Mastery, iii) Personal Growth, iv) Positive Relations, v) Purpose in Life and vi) Self-Acceptance] and interpersonal commitment [i) friendship, ii) family, and iii) romantic relationship] across genders irrespective of online dating application usage status.

$H_0$4: There is no significant interaction effect between gender and online dating applications usage status on psychological wellbeing [[(i) Autonomy, ii) Environmental Mastery, iii) Personal Growth, iv) Positive Relations, v) Purpose in Life and vi) Self-Acceptance] and interpersonal commitment [i) friendship, ii) family, and iii) romantic relationship]

$H_1$4: There is a significant interaction effect between gender and online dating applications usage status on psychological wellbeing [[(i) Autonomy, ii) Environmental Mastery, iii) Personal Growth, iv) Positive Relations, v) Purpose in Life and vi) Self-Acceptance] and interpersonal commitment [i) friendship, ii) family, and iii) romantic relationship]

3.4 Variables:

3.4.1 Definition of Variables:

In research, variables refer to the traits or features that can be quantified or observed, showing variation among differing subjects or objects under examination (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The current investigation delineates these variables into independent and dependent categories.

A variable encompasses any attribute, figure, or measure that can be assessed or enumerated. They are termed "variables" due to the ability of their values to "vary" across data units within a population or at different times or locations (Babbie, 2020). Within psychological research, variables are typically classified by their function within the study and their measurement level.

For this study focusing on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment among dating app users and non-users, the variables are specified as follows:

3.4.2 Independent Variables:

Dating App Usage Status: Distinguished as Users vs. Non-users

Users: Individuals who have actively engaged with at least one dating application for no less than three months

Non-users: Individuals who have never utilized any dating application

Gender: Classified as Male vs. Female

Self-identified gender of participants

3.4.3 Dependent Variables:

- **Psychological Wellbeing**: Described as the positive functioning of individuals across six dimensions as presented by Ryff & Keyes (1995). Ryff (1989) asserts that psychological wellbeing encompasses not just the absence of illness or negative

emotions but also the presence of positive psychological resources contributing to optimal human function and quality of life. The six dimensions are:

I. *Self-acceptance*: Favourable attitudes toward oneself and one's past
II. *Positive relations*: Warm, satisfying, and trusting connections with others
III. *Autonomy*: Self-sufficiency and determination
IV. *Environmental mastery*: Capability to handle life and the external environment
V. *Purpose in life*: Objectives, intentions, and a sense of direction
VI. *Personal growth*: The perception of ongoing development and the realization of one's potential

Interpersonal Commitment: Defined as the degree to which one shows commitment behaviors, contributions, and endeavors to sustain and perpetuate relationships across three sectors. This scale is presented by Immadi, R. S., Muthukuri, S., Reddy A, D., Robin, I. G., & Islam, M. (2022). As per Rusbult's (1980) investment model of commitment, interpersonal commitment signifies the intention to persist in a relationship, encompassing a long-term perspective toward involvement and psychological connection to it. In this study, interpersonal commitment is analyzed across three domains:

I. *Friendship*: An individual's behaviors, contributions, and efforts aimed at maintaining and fostering friendships.
II. *Family*: Young adults' endeavors to sustain interactive and healthy relationships with their parents and siblings
III. *Relationship*: One's efforts to uphold committed behaviors in a romantic relationship, characterized by monogamy and shared long-term objectives

3.4.4 Control Variables:

- Age
- Educational status
- Relationship status

- Duration of dating app usage (for users)
- Frequency of dating app usage (for users)
- Purpose of dating app usage (for users)

3.5. Participants:

The research will encompass 80 individuals (40 males and 40 females) aged between 18 and 25 years, categorized into those who utilize dating applications and those who do not:

- 20 male dating app users
- 20 male non-dating app users
- 20 female dating app users
- 20 female non-dating app users

3.5.1 Inclusion Criteria:-

- Young adults aged 18 to 25 years
- For users: Active engagement with at least one dating application (e.g., Tinder, Bumble, OkCupid, Hinge, etc.) for a minimum duration of three months with a frequency of at least one login per week
- For non-users: No previous engagement with any dating application at any time
- Capability of understanding, reading, and completing questionnaires in English
- Participation is voluntary and requires informed consent
- Residents of Kolkata for a minimum of the last five years (to ensure cultural uniformity)
- Currently enrolled in or having graduated from a higher education institution

3.5.2 Exclusion Criteria:-

- Individuals reporting a history of psychiatric disorders, including but not limited to major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, and psychotic disorders
- Individuals currently receiving psychological therapy or counseling for any mental health issues
- Individuals with significant cognitive impairments that hinder their ability to accurately respond to questionnaires
- Individuals who have utilized dating applications for less than three months (within the user category)
- Individuals who have stopped using dating applications in the past six months (excluded from both user and non-user categories)
- Individuals reporting current issues with substance abuse
- Individuals who state they have provided inaccurate information during the screening or assessment process
- Individuals presently experiencing acute psychological distress
- Individuals who are uncomfortable discussing aspects of relationship dynamics and interpersonal connections.

3.6. Sampling:

A random sampling approach will be utilized to select participants who satisfy the inclusion criteria. Various recruitment methods will be employed:

- Announcements on social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp providing comprehensive details regarding the study and eligibility requirements.
- Implementation of a snowball sampling technique, where current participants can refer prospective participants who fulfill the criteria.
- Engagement with different education institutes.

It will be ensured that both genders and user/non-user status are represented. A informed consent will be provided before to all interested individuals to verify their compliance with the inclusion criteria prior to their formal enrollment in the study.

3.7 Tools:

3.7.1 Psychological Wellbeing Scale (Ryff & Keyes, 1995)

The 42-item variant of Ryff's Psychological Wellbeing Scale will be employed to assess six facets of psychological wellbeing. Each facet is evaluated using seven items:

- Autonomy: Looks into self-reliance and self-governance (e. g. , "I assess myself based on what I consider significant, rather than adhering to the values imposed by others. ")
- Environmental mastery: Gauges the ability to navigate and manage one's life and surroundings (e. g. , "I am proficient at juggling the various obligations in my daily life. ")
- Purpose in life: Investigates aspirations, motivations, and sense of direction (e. g. , "Some individuals drift through life without direction, but I do not belong to that category. ")
- Personal growth: Assesses the perception of ongoing development and realization of potential (e. g. , "I believe it is essential to pursue new experiences that challenge my self-perception and understanding of the world. ")
- Positive relations: Evaluates warm, fulfilling, and trusting interpersonal connections (e. g. , "Others would describe me as generous, willing to devote my time to those around me. ")
- Self-acceptance: Assesses positive perceptions of oneself and one's life experiences (e. g. , "When reflecting on my life's journey, I feel satisfied with how things have turned out. ")

Participants will provide responses on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Items expressed negatively are reverse-scored. Scores for each dimension

can range from 7 to 42, with elevated scores reflecting enhanced wellbeing in that particular area. The overall score may vary from 42 to 252.

3.7.2 Interpersonal Commitment Scale (I. C. S)

The Interpersonal Commitment Scale comprises 71 items focused on commitment measurement across three areas:

- **Friendship Scale** (20 items): Evaluates commitment actions, contributions, and efforts to sustain friendships.

Sample items include: "I prioritize making time to meet my friends, even when my schedule is hectic," "I acknowledge significant dates in my friends' lives," "I am prepared to adjust my preferences to support my friends. "

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha of 0. 89

Scoring range: 20-100, with higher values representing increased commitment to friendships.

- **Family Scale** (28 items): Assesses the commitment of young adults in fostering healthy relationships with parents and siblings.

Sample items include: "I make a consistent effort to stay in touch with my family members," "I place family gatherings above other social events," "I share my personal successes and struggles with my family. "

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha of 0. 92

Scoring range: 28-140, with higher scores indicating deeper commitment to family.

- **Relationship Scale** (23 items): Evaluates commitment to romantic relationships characterized by exclusivity and mutual long-term objectives.

Sample items include: "I view my current relationship as a long-term commitment," "I am willing to make sacrifices for my partner," "I actively strive to resolve conflicts with my partner. "

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha of 0. 91

Scoring range: 23-115, with elevated scores signifying greater commitment to romantic partnerships.

The scale incorporates items that are scored positively and negatively. Responses are collected on a 5-point Likert scale, with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items that are negatively phrased are reverse-scored. The I. C. S does not offer a cumulative score since commitment levels across various interpersonal domains can differ independently. Elevated scores on individual domain scales signify a greater level of commitment within that particular domain.

Clinical implications of the Interpersonal Commitment Scale encompass:

- Assessing individual levels of commitment across various relationships,
- Comprehending the dynamics of relationships in relation to maintenance efforts,
- Assisting counselors in understanding their clients' social relationship patterns,
- Clarifying perceived contributions and efforts in addressing interpersonal challenges.

3.7.3 Demographic Information and Dating App Usage Questionnaire

Dating app usage trends (for users):

- Dating applications utilized,
- Duration of use (in months or years),
- Frequency of engagement (daily, several times a week, weekly),
- Average duration of each session,
- Primary intent of use (casual dating, serious relationships, friendship),
- Number of matches in the previous month,
- Count of meaningful conversations in the past month,
- Number of in-person meetings resulting from app usage in the last month,

- Level of satisfaction with the dating app experience (on a 1-5 scale).

For non-users:

- Reasons for not utilizing dating applications,
- Main approaches to meeting potential romantic partners,
- Views on online dating.

3.8 Procedure

3.8.1 Preparatory Phase:

- Creation and final approval of all research instruments and protocols
- Securing approval from the institutional ethics committee
- Training research assistants tasked with data collection

3.8.2 Data Collection Phase:

- Securing written informed consent from participants following a comprehensive explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, and confidentiality protocols
- Gathering demographic data (includes whether the participant is an online dating application user or non-user)
- Administering psychological well-being and interpersonal commitment assessments
- To ensure consistency, all questionnaires will be presented in the same sequence for every participant.

Participants will complete the questionnaires in a quiet, private environment.

3.8.3 Post-Assessment Phase:

- Conducting a brief feedback with participants regarding their study experience
- Providing a debriefing on the study's overall objectives

3.8.4 Data Management:

- All data will be anonymized and stored safely
- Physical questionnaires will be secured
- Access to the data will be restricted to the principal investigator and authorized research team members
- The total duration of the procedure is anticipated to be approximately 30 minutes per participant. Data collection will occur in two months.

3.9 Statistical Analysis

The subsequent statistical evaluations will be conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 16:

3.9.1 Preliminary Analyses:

- Identification of outliers, assessment of missing data, and examination of distribution normality
- Descriptive statistics will include mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis for all variables
- Frequency distributions will be analyzed for categorical variables

3.9.2 Independent Samples t-tests: To investigate gender disparities in psychological wellbeing (total scores and dimension scores) as well as in interpersonal commitment domains.

3.9.3 Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):

To assess the main effects of two independent variables (dating app usage status and gender) along with their interaction effect on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment domains

- Factor 1: Online Dating app usage status (Users vs. Non-users)
- Factor 2: Gender (Male vs. Female)
- Factor 3: Online Dating applications usage status (Users vs. Non-Users) x Gender (Males vs. Females)

A distinct ANOVA will be performed for each dependent variable:

- Overall psychological wellbeing
- Each of the six dimensions of psychological wellbeing
- Friendship commitment
- Family commitment
- Relationship commitment

3.9.4 Graphical Representation:

- Bar graphs and line graphs will be utilized to visually depict main effects and interaction effects

All statistical analyses will be executed with an alpha level of 0. 05. In instances involving multiple comparisons, suitable corrections will be implemented to manage Type I error

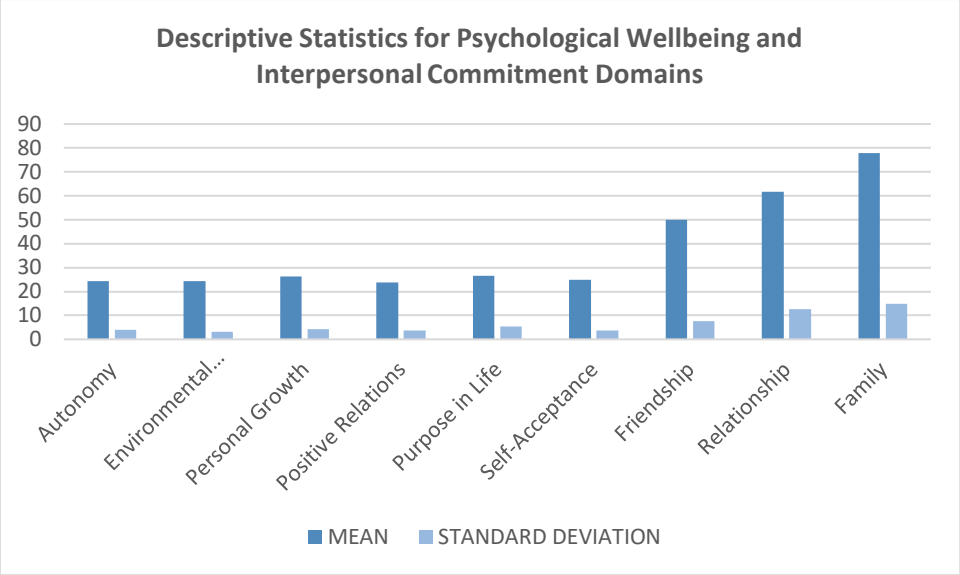
4. RESULTS

The findings of statistical analyses comparing the psychological well-being and interpersonal commitment of online dating app users and non-users are presented in this chapter. Additionally, it looks at how gender differs and how using dating apps interacts with gender. This comprises two-way ANOVA results, independent samples t-tests, and descriptive statistics arranged in accordance with the hypotheses.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Psychological Wellbeing and Interpersonal Commitment Domains (N=80)

DOMAIN	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Autonomy	24.23	4.01
Environmental Mastery	24.29	3.23
Personal Growth	26.40	4.23
Positive Relations	23.78	3.74
Purpose in Life	26.66	5.36
Self-Acceptance	24.75	3.73
Friendship	49.94	7.70
Relationship	61.56	12.66
Family	77.75	14.77



Measuring several different facets of optimum functioning, the psychological well-being scale has six components:

- Autonomy (mean=24. 23, SD=4. 01) shows independence and self-determination in thought and behavior.
- The capacity to effectively run one's life and environment is gauged by Environmental Mastery (M = 24. 29, SD = 3. 23).
- Personal Growth (M = 26. 40, SD = 4. 23) evaluate constant development and willingness to try out different things.
- Positive Relations and empathic understanding abound (M = 23. 78, SD = 3. 74).
- Purpose in Life (M = 26. 66, SD = 5. 36) gauges objective orientation and life significance.
- Self-Acceptance (M = 24. 75, SD = 3. 73) shows acceptance toward oneself as well as acceptance of different aspects of oneself.

The three domains of the interpersonal commitment scale gauge commitment in various kinds of relationships:

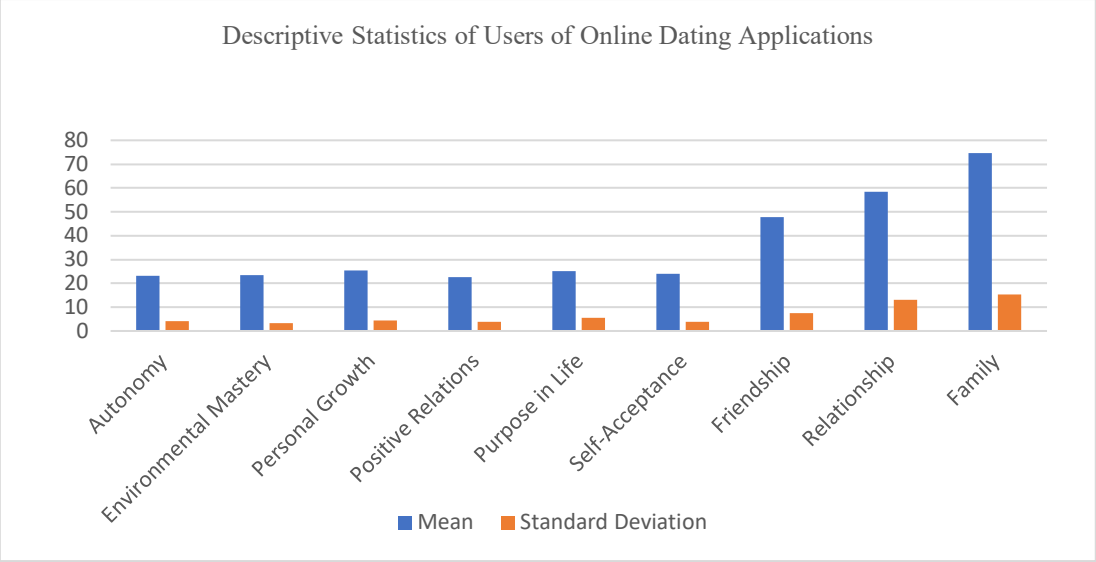
- Friendship (M = 49. 94, SD = 7. 70) measures commitment to keeping friendship relationships.

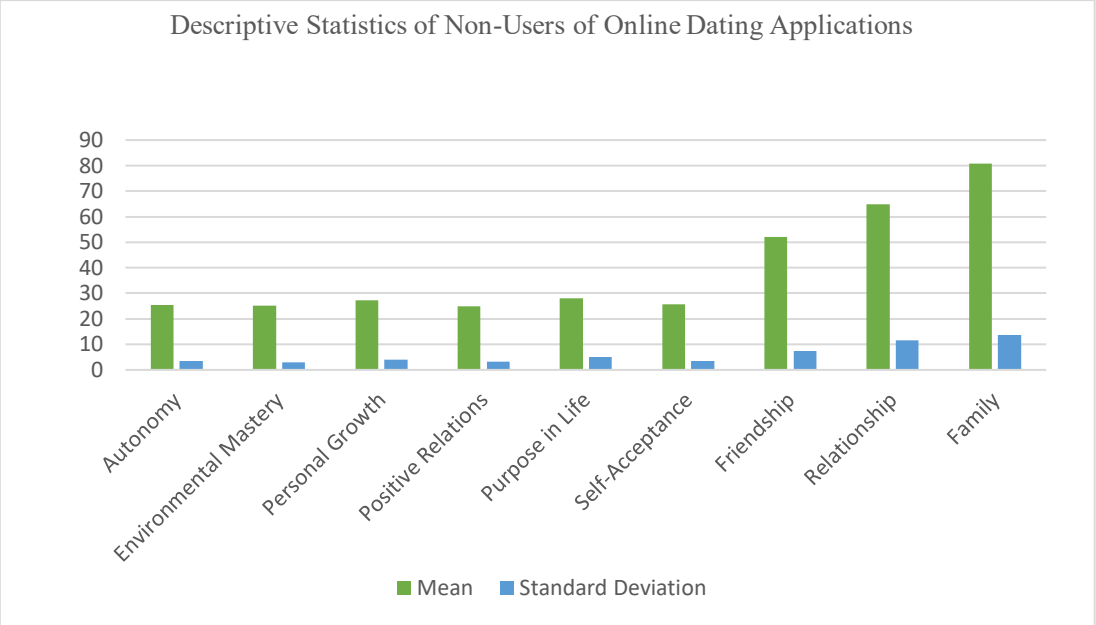
- Regarding commitment to romantic relationships, Relationship (M = 61. 56, SD = 12. 66) assess it.
- Family (M = 77. 75, SD = 14. 77) measures dedication to family relationships.

The higher average for Family commitment points toward stronger family relationship commitment than friendship or romantic partners among respondents in general.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of individuals of users and non-users of Online Dating Applications. N=40 (for Users) and N=40 (for Non-Users)

Domains	Mean (for Users) N= 40	Standard Deviation (for Users)	Mean (for Non-Users) N=40	Standard Deviation (for Non-Users)
Autonomy	23.15	4.18	25.30	3.58
Environmental Mastery	23.40	3.35	25.18	2.85
Personal Growth	25.53	4.31	27.28	4.02
Positive Relations	22.68	3.85	24.88	3.31
Purpose in Life	25.25	5.45	28.08	4.93
Self-Acceptance	23.88	3.89	25.63	3.41
Friendship	47.83	7.52	52.05	7.32
Relationship	58.40	13.01	64.73	11.59
Family	74.63	15.21	80.88	13.72



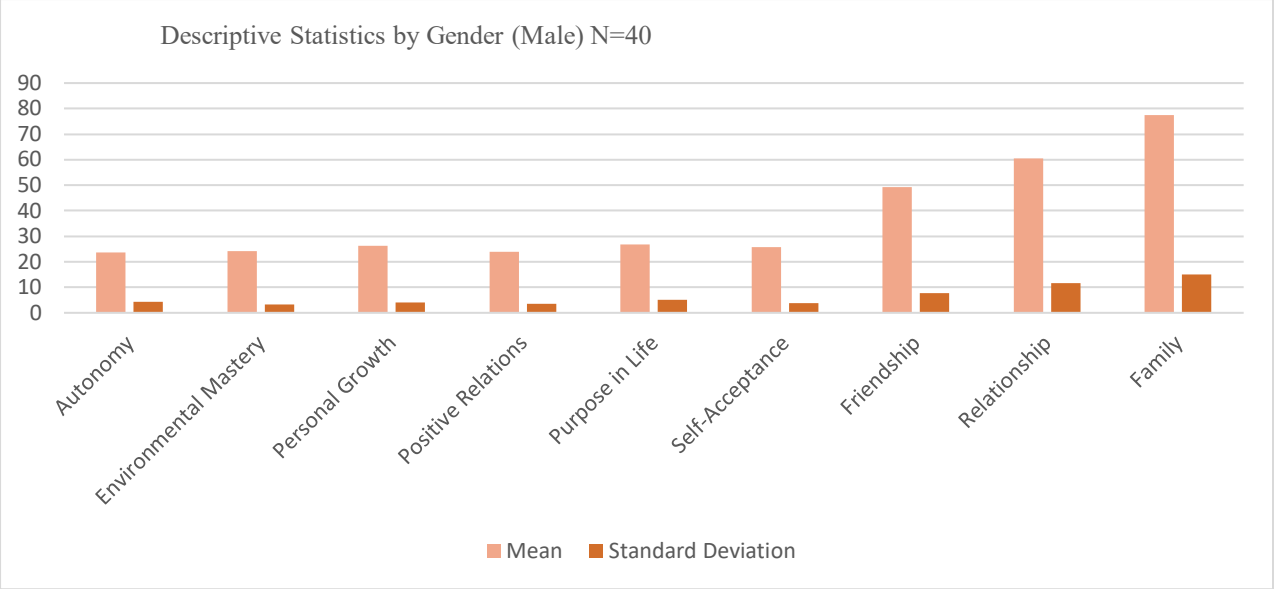


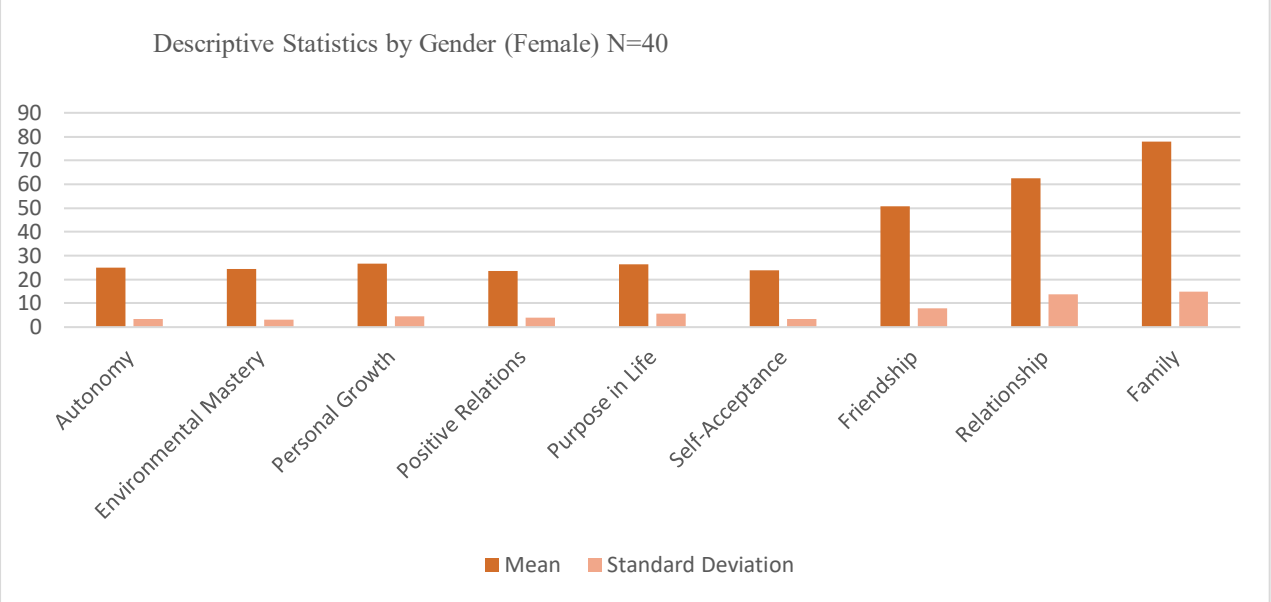
- Non-users always had higher scores for every psychological wellness domains compared to users. Non-users (M = 25. 30, SD = 3. 58) scored more highly in autonomy domain compared with users (M = 23. 15, SD = 4. 18).
- Non-users (M = 25. 18, SD = 2. 85) had more ability to handle their surroundings effectively than Users (M = 23. 40, SD = 3. 35) grown under Environmental Mastery.
- In Personal Growth, Non users (M = 27. 28, SD = 4. 02) reported greater continuous development and openness to experiences than did users (M = 25. 53, SD = 4. 31).
- Non-users (M = 24. 88, SD = 3. 31) kept the trend going with Positive Relations, reporting more compassionate empathy and greater quality of relationships than users (M = 22. 68, SD = 3. 85).

- Non-users (M = 28. 08, SD = 4. 93) had more purpose in life in comparison with users (M = 25. 25, SD = 5. 45) in terms of goal-directedness and sense of value.
- Users (M = 23. 88, SD = 3. 89) had less good self-attitudes in Self-Acceptance finally than non-users (M = 25. 63, SD = 3. 41).
- The aspects of interpersonal engagement presented parallel trends. Users' Friendship engagement (M = 47. 83, SD = 7. 52) was lower than non-users' (M = 52. 05, SD = 7. 32), therefore they are more dedicated to keeping friend relationships.
- Non-users (M = 64. 73, SD = 11. 59) exhibited more commitment to dating relationships than users (M = 58. 40, SD = 13. 01) for Relationship commitment.
- Non-users also had more Family commitment (M = 80. 88, SD = 13. 72) than users (M = 74. 63, SD = 15. 21).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics by Gender irrespective of online dating application user and non-user

Domains	**Mean (for Males) (n=40)**	**Standard Deviation (for Males)**	**Mean (for Females) (n=40)**	**Standard Deviation (for Females)**
Autonomy	23.55	4.44	24.90	3.44
Environmental Mastery	24.15	3.27	24.42	3.21
Personal Growth	26.16	4.07	26.70	4.41
Positive Relations	23.87	3.65	23.67	3.87
Purpose in Life	26.85	5.06	26.47	5.71
Self-Acceptance	25.72	3.78	23.77	3.47
Friendship	49.22	7.59	50.65	7.85
Relationship	60.50	11.63	62.62	13.69
Family	77.50	14.96	78.00	14.77





- Psychological Wellbeing differences were seen to have mixed distribution. Females (M = 24. 90, SD = 3. 44) in Autonomy indicated more independence and self-determination than male (M = 23. 55, SD = 4. 44).

- Females (M = 24. 42, SD = 3. 21) exhibited somewhat greater capacity to handle their environment well than males (M = 24. 15, SD = 3. 27) in Environmental Mastery.
- Comparatively, in Personal Growth, females (M = 26. 70, SD = 4. 41) scored slightly lower than males (M = 26. 16, SD = 4. 07) for continuous growth and openness to experience.

- By contrast, males rated somewhat more highly in Positive Relations (M = 23. 87, SD = 3. 65) than females (M = 23. 67, SD = 3. 87), revealing somewhat better quality relationships and empathy.
- Males (M = 26. 85, SD = 5. 06) had somewhat more objective objective-driven activity and sense of meaning than females (M = 26. 47, SD = 5. 71) when it came to Purpose in Life.
- Males, notably, scored much higher on Self-Acceptance (M = 25. 72, SD = 3. 78) than females did, reflecting more positive feelings toward themselves and more self-acceptance.

Across domains of interpersonal commitment, females always rated somewhat higher than males.

- Females in Friendship dedication scored slightly higher in maintaining friendship ties than males (M=50. 65, SD = 7. 85; M = 49. 22, SD = 7. 59)

- Females (M = 62. 62, SD = 13. 69) reported more devotion to love relationships than did men (M = 60. 50, SD = 11. 63) for Relationship.
- Females also had slightly higher Family commitment (M = 78. 00, SD = 14. 77) than men (M = 77. 50, SD = 14. 96).

Tests of Normality by Shapiro-Wilk:

After finding the result of online dating applications users (coded as 1. 00) and non-users (coded as 2. 00), the Shapiro-Wilk test results evaluate normality across dimensions of Psychological well-being and Interpersonal Commitment domains. Autonomy reveals major non-normality for dating app users (p=0. 003) but not for non-users (p=0. 383), therefore contributing to psychological well-being. For both groups (p>0. 05), Environmental Mastery data seems to show normally distributed distribution. For non-users (p=0. 002), Personal Growth shows normal distribution for consumers (p=0. 147) but notable non-normality. In both groups (p>0. 05), Positive Relations shows a normal distribution. Purpose in Life shows great non-normality for users (p=0. 009) but normal distribution for non-users (p=0. 688). Across both groups (p>0. 05), Self-Acceptance data shows normal distribution. For interpersonal commitment scale, the Friendship variable greatly deviates from normality in both groups (users: p=0. 007, non-users: p. 002). Likewise, both Relationship and Family

commitment measures reveal great non-normality throughout both user groups ($p \leq 0.001$). These results have significant methodological consequences since they imply that non-parametric methods or data changes would be required in the analysis of variables especially the interpersonal commitment dimensions and some psychological well-being that show marked departures from normal distribution. For every group, the constant sample size ($df=40$) allows for a dependable comparison of online dating users to non-users.

4.2 Inferential Statistics

4.2.1 Independent Samples t tests

Table 1 : Independent Samples Test of gender differences irrespective of Online Dating applications usage

Domains	t-value	df	Level of Significance (Two-Tailed)	Mean Difference
Autonomy	-1.52	78	0.133	-1.35
Environmental Mastery	-0.38	78	0.706	-0.28
Personal Growth	-0.63	78	0.530	-0.60
Positive Relations	0.24	78	0.813	0.20
Purpose in Life	0.31	78	0.757	0.38
Self-Acceptance	2.41	78	0.019**	1.95
Friendship	-0.83	78	0.412	-1.43
Relationship	-0.75	78	0.457	-2.13
Family	-0.15	78	0.881	-0.50

p value at 0.01 level of significance **

Table 1 shows the findings of independent samples t-tests probing gender variances spanning nine areas of psychological well-being and interpersonal commitment. Analysis of the psychological wellbeing domains reveals no statistically significant gender differences for Autonomy (t = -1. 52, df = 78, p = 0. 133), Environmental Mastery (t = -0. 38, df = 78, p = 0. 706), Personal Growth (t = -0. 63, df = 78, p = 0. 530), Positive Relations (t = 0. 24, df = 78, p = 0. 813), and Purpose in Life (t = 0. 31, df = 78, p = 0. 757). However, a notable variation was

seen in the Self-Acceptance category (t = 2. 41, df = 78, p = 0. 019), with men scoring much more than women (mean difference = 1. 95).

For the interpersonal commitment areas, findings reveal no meaningful gender differences in Friendship (t = -0. 83, df = 78, p = 0. 412), Relationship (t = -0. 75, df = 78, p = 0. 457), or Family (t = -0. 15, df = 78, p = 0. 881). Following from these results, the null hypothesis $H_0$1 is rejected only for the Self-Acceptance domain; it is maintained for all other domains. This means that only Self-Acceptance accepts the alternative hypothesis $H_1$1, suggesting a notable distinction between male and female young adults particularly in this domain of psychological wellbeing. In all other fields, regardless of online dating app usage, no major gender differences were found.

4.2.2 Two-Way ANOVA

Table 1: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Online Dating and Gender only)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Online Dating	Autonomy	11.250	1	11.250	0.711	.402
	Environmental Mastery	2.113	1	2.113	0.208	.650
	Personal Growth	4.050	1	4.050	0.228	.634
	Positive Relations	6.050	1	6.050	0.431	.514
	Purpose in Life	1.512	1	1.512	0.052*	.820
	Self-Acceptance	2.450	1	2.450	0.183	.670
	Friendship	127.512	1	127.512	2.162	.146
	Relationship	277.512	1	277.512	1.807	.183
	Family	18.050	1	18.050	0.082	.776
Gender	Autonomy	36.450	1	36.450	2.304	.133
	Environmental Mastery	1.512	1	1.512	0.149	.701
	Personal Growth	7.200	1	7.200	0.405	.526
	Positive Relations	0.800	1	0.800	0.057	.812
	Purpose in Life	2.813	1	2.813	0.097	.757
	Self-Acceptance	76.050	1	76.050	5.680	.020*

p value at 0.05 level of significance *

Table 1 of the two-way ANOVA analyses the impact of online dating use and gender on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment. Concerning domains of psychological wellbeing, the study found no statistically significant difference in autonomy levels between online dating users and non-users (F(1) = 0. 711, p = . 402). Although males and females showed some variation in autonomy scores (F(1) = 2. 304, p = . 133), this difference did not reach statistical significance. Environmental mastery revealed no noteworthy variations connected to online dating use (F(1) = 0. 208, p = . 650) or gender (F(1) = 0. 149, p = . 701). Likewise, personal development showed no noteworthy impact from online dating (F(1) = 0. 228, p = . 634) or gender variations (F(1) = 0. 405, p = . 526). Analysis for positive relationships with others found that neither internet dating use (F(1) = 0. 431, p = . 514) nor gender (F(1) = 0. 057, p = . 812) had much influence on these ratings. Purpose in life ratings revealed no noticeable variations among online dating participants and non users (F(1) = 0. 052, p = . 820) or between genders (F(1) = 0. 097, p = . 757). Online dating use had no meaningful effect on self-acceptance (F(1) = 0. 183, p = . 670); but, a notable gender difference was noted (F(1) = 5. 680, p = . 020), showing that males and females vary in their degrees of self-acceptance.

Concerning interpersonal commitment domains, it was found that online dating use had no major impact on friendship commitment ratings (F(1) = 2. 162, p = . 146), even if the average difference was somewhat greater relative to other domains (Sum of Squares = 127. 512). Despite having the biggest sum of squares (277. 512) among all variables, the findings also showed no notable influence of online dating use on commitment to romantic relationships (F(1) = 1. 807, p = . 183). Family commitment ratings revealed no meaningful variations between online dating consumers and non-users (F(1) = 0. 082, p = . 776). The table excluded gender analysis for the fields of interpersonal commitment.

Given these results, we do not reject null hypothesis H02 since no significant variations were discovered for any psychological well-being or interpersonal commitment depending on online dating use. For hypothesis H03, we partially reject the null hypothesis, as a significant gender difference was found for self-acceptance, but not for the other five psychological wellbeing domains.

Table 2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Online Dating * Gender only)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Online Dating * Gender	Autonomy	18.050	1	18.050	1.141	.289
	Environmental Mastery	46.513	1	46.513	4.577	.036*
	Personal Growth	54.450	1	54.450	3.066	.084
	Positive Relations	33.800	1	33.800	2.407	.125
	Purpose in Life	52.813	1	52.813	1.812	.182
	Self-Acceptance	5.000	1	5.000	0.373	.543
	Friendship	37.813	1	37.813	0.641	.426
	Relationship	632.813	1	632.813	4.121	.046*
	Family	396.050	1	396.050	1.789	.185

p value below 0.05 level of significance *

Table 2 of two-way ANOVA results investigating the interaction effects between online dating usage and gender on psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment showed some interesting results. For autonomy, the interaction between online dating and gender was not statistically significant (F(1) = 1. 141, p = . 289), indicating that the effect of online dating on autonomy does not differ significantly between males and females. Environmental mastery, however, revealed a notable interaction effect (F(1) = 4. 577, p = . 036), indicating that the effect of online dating on it varies according to gender. Personal growth showed a barely

noteworthy interaction effect (F(1) = 3. 066, p = . 084), which barely misses the traditional . 05 significance threshold but could point to a possible trend whereby online dating influences personal development variably across sexes. With an F(1) of 2. 407 and a p of . 125, the interaction effect for positive relations with others was not substantial, indicating comparable patterns of online dating effects on positive relations across sexes. Purpose in life revealed no noteworthy interaction effect (F(1) = 1. 812, p = . 182), nor did self-acceptance (F(1) = 0. 373, p = . 543), suggesting that online dating influences these components of psychological wellbeing equally for both men and women.

Concerning interpersonal commitment domains, the study found no notable interaction effect between online dating and gender for friendship commitment (F(1) = 0. 641, p = . 426). But romantic relationship commitment showed a notable interaction effect (F(1) = 4. 121, p = . 046), implying that online dating influences men's and women's commitment to romantic relationships variably. The family commitment domain showed no major interaction effect (F(1) = 1. 789, p = . 185), suggesting online dating influences family commitment equally across sexes.

These results lead us to partially reject null hypothesis H04 since significant interaction effects between gender and online dating were found for environmental mastery and romantic relationship commitment, while the other seven domains showed no significant interaction effects. This implies that online dating affects some elements of psychological wellbeing (particularly environmental mastery) and interpersonal commitment (specifically romantic relationships) differently for men and women, hence reflecting a great variance between them. In conclusion, although most fields reveal regular consequences of online dating across genders, the way people control their surroundings and devote themselves to romantic relationships seems to be variably influenced by online dating use depending on gender.

5. DISCUSSIONS

This dissertation examined distinctions between users and non-users of online dating applications in relation to various aspects of psychological wellbeing and interpersonal Commitment. Several prominent results were identified:

- **Online Dating App Usage:** Non-users consistently exhibited superior scores compared to users in all assessed domains of psychological wellbeing and relational commitment, with statistically significant variations noted in autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations, purpose in life, self-acceptance, friendship, and relationship commitment.

- **Gender Differences:** The only domain with significant gender disparities was self-acceptance, with males indicating higher levels than females. The remaining domains did not reveal any statistically significant gender variations.

- **Interaction Effects:** Significant interaction effects were noted involving gender and the use of online dating, particularly in the areas of environmental mastery and relationship commitment, indicating that the implications of online dating applications differ between males and females within these particular contexts.

The Shapiro-Wilk test reveals significant non-normality in certain dimensions of psychological well-being and interpersonal commitment for both online dating users and non-users. Autonomy and Purpose in Life show non-normality primarily for dating app users, whereas Friendship, Relationship, and Family commitment measures exhibit significant non-normality across both groups. This indicates that non-parametric methods or data transformations are necessary for accurate analysis, with a consistent sample size allowing reliable comparisons between users and non-users.

The lower psychological wellbeing scores for dating app users are consistent with findings from various recent studies. Holtzhausen et al. (2020) indicated that dating app users reported heightened psychological distress and diminished self-esteem in comparison to non-users. This

could be linked to the evaluative aspects of dating apps, where users frequently encounter social comparisons and possible rejection.

The observation that non-users reported higher autonomy scores (M = 25. 30, SD = 3. 58) than users (M = 23. 15, SD = 4. 18) may reflect what Orosz et al. (2018) characterized as the "gamification of dating," wherein external validation through matches and likes can weaken intrinsic motivation and self-determination. Users might develop a reliance on external validation, which could hinder their sense of autonomy.

Results regarding environmental mastery reflected similar trends, with non-users achieving higher scores (M = 25. 18, SD = 2. 85) than users (M = 23. 40, SD = 3. 35). This finding corresponds to research by Sumter and Vandenbosch (2019), suggesting that users of dating applications may face diminished control over their social contexts owing to the unpredictable dynamics of online interactions and matches driven by algorithms.

The significant difference observed in positive relations (non-users M = 24. 88, SD = 3. 31; users M = 22. 68, SD = 3. 85) warrants attention and aligns with findings from Bhattacharya et al. (2019), who noted that excessive use of dating applications correlated with a decline in the quality of existing relationships. This effect could arise from what Tong et al. (2016) identified as the "choice overload effect," where an abundance of perceived potential partners leads to reduced satisfaction and investment in current affiliations.

Purpose in life scores revealed a notable contrast between non-users (M = 28. 08, SD = 4. 93) and users (M = 25. 25, SD = 5. 45). This observation is supported by research conducted by Festinger et al. (2021), which indicated that individuals using dating applications may undergo a "dating limbo" state characterized by uncertainty and transient connections undermining their sense of purpose and direction.

The discovery that non-users exhibited greater commitment in the domains of friendship, romantic relationships, and family mirrors findings from Quiroz (2020), who reported that

users of dating applications indicated lower commitment levels within their relationships, resulting from a "perpetual shopping" attitude that detracts from relationship investment.

Our findings indicated that users displayed lower commitment to friendship (M = 47. 83, SD = 7. 52) compared to non-users (M = 52. 05, SD = 7. 32), which aligns with the concept of "relational displacement" described by Sharabi and Timmermans (2021), highlighting how the time and emotional investment required by online dating activities can diminish the resources available for maintaining existing friendships.

The notable disparity in relationship commitment observed between non-users (M = 64. 73, SD = 11. 59) and users (M = 58. 40, SD = 13. 01) corroborates the findings of Alexopoulos et al. (2020), who indicated that individuals utilizing dating applications frequently express increased uncertainty regarding exclusivity and commitment within relationships. This could be linked to the concept described by Hobbs et al. (2017) as the "illusion of abundance," which implies that the perception of an expanded dating pool can decrease the commitment to an individual relationship.

This trend also applies to family commitment, with non-users scoring higher (M = 80. 88, SD = 13. 72) compared to users (M = 74. 63, SD = 15. 21). However, this disparity was close to but did not achieve statistical significance (p = . 052). This observation is consistent with findings from Trivedi and Sharma (2018), revealing that heightened usage of dating apps was correlated with diminished interaction time with family among young Indian adults.

A prominent gender difference was observed in self-acceptance, where males (M = 25. 72, SD = 3. 77) demonstrated significantly higher scores than females (M = 23. 77, SD = 3. 46). This observation aligns with the research conducted by Dhir et al. (2021), which indicated that women using dating platforms typically face greater concerns regarding body image and are more prone to self-critical thoughts, influenced by the appearance-centric evaluations prevalent within such platforms.

The lack of significant gender differences in other domains of psychological wellbeing contradicts some previous studies that have suggested more extensive gender inequalities. For instance, Ryff and Singer (2008) reported that women generally outperformed men in positive relationships and personal growth, while men had higher scores in autonomy and self-acceptance. The similarities observed in our research may reflect shifting gender norms and expectations, particularly among younger demographics, which constitute the majority of dating app users.

Regarding interpersonal commitment, although females exhibited marginally higher average scores across all three categories, these distinctions did not reach statistical significance. This finding contrasts with Kallis et al. (2019), who noted that women usually report heightened relationship commitment than men in the realm of online dating. The comparable levels of commitment found in this study may be indicative of evolving attitudes towards relationships across genders.

The substantial interaction effects noted in environmental mastery and relationship commitment underscore the differing influences of dating applications on males and females. In terms of environmental mastery, female users achieved higher scores (M = 25. 35, SD = 3. 48) compared to male users (M = 23. 55, SD = 2. 85), while the inverse was true among non-users (males M = 24. 75, SD = 3. 61; females M = 23. 50, SD = 2. 70). This trend indicates that dating applications may undermine men's perceptions of environmental control while potentially enhancing those perceptions for women.

This observation is supported by research conducted by Strubel and Petrie (2017), which found that male users of dating apps experienced increased social comparison and a diminished sense of control in contrast to female users, who typically reported a greater degree of selectivity and autonomy. The more pronounced decline in environmental mastery observed among male users may reflect the "competitive disadvantage" described by Anderson et al. (2020), which affects numerous men on dating platforms where gender imbalances contribute to lower match rates and heightened experiences of rejection.

In terms of relationship commitment, female users scored significantly higher (M = 67. 30, SD = 14. 74) than male users (M = 59. 55, SD = 11. 86), while among non-users, males exhibited slightly elevated commitment levels (M = 61. 45, SD = 11. 60) compared to females (M = 57. 95, SD = 11. 01). This interaction implies that the influence of dating applications on relationship attitudes may vary based on gender.

This trend aligns with the research conducted by Sevi et al. (2020), who discovered that individuals of different genders often utilize dating applications with varying objectives related to relationships females tend to pursue emotional connections and commitment more frequently, while males are more inclined towards casual encounters. The greater emphasis on relationship commitment among female participants may indicate this divergence in goals.

These outcomes present multiple implications for prevailing theoretical models. Firstly, they lend support to Ryff's multidimensional framework of psychological well-being by illustrating that various aspects can be distinctly influenced by external factors like the use of dating apps. The persistent trend of lower scores across all dimensions among users implies that dating applications could exert widespread rather than specific impacts on well-being.

Secondly, the findings reinforce attachment theory's viewpoint on relationships mediated by technology. As observed by Chin et al. (2019), the sporadic reinforcement tendencies prevalent in dating apps (such as unpredictable matches and replies) may engender anxious attachment styles that jeopardize security and overall well-being. The decreased scores regarding positive relationships and commitment to relationships among users correspond with this theoretical interpretation.

Thirdly, the results add to the expanding body of literature on the effects of "choice overload" in digital settings. As posited by Schwartz (2016), an excess of options can lead to difficulties in decision-making, diminished satisfaction, and hesitance towards commitment. The diminished scores in commitment among dating app users may embody this psychological

phenomenon, thereby affirming the relevance of choice overload theory in the context of online dating.

The findings bear several practical consequences for individual users, relationship therapists, and developers of dating platforms:

- For Users: Recognizing the possible adverse correlations between the utilization of dating apps and various aspects of well-being could guide users toward adopting more balanced practices. Establishing mindful limits on app usage and nurturing existing relationships may assist in alleviating potential negative repercussions.

- For Mental Health Professionals: Counselors addressing clients facing relationship challenges or mental health issues should investigate their online dating behaviors as a potential factor. The identified gender differences, especially concerning self-acceptance and interaction effects, point to the necessity for gender-sensitive methodologies when tackling issues related to dating app usage.

- For Dating App Developers: These findings indicate opportunities to create features that could lessen adverse impacts on well-being. For instance, platforms might integrate components that promote more profound connections rather than facilitating endless swiping or introduce features encouraging users to contemplate relationship aspirations and values instead of focusing primarily on appearance-driven judgments.

- For Educators: The results underscore the need to incorporate discussions on healthy digital relationship practices in educational programs on relationships, particularly those aimed at young adults, who represent the majority of dating app users.

6. LIMITATIONS

Several limitations takes place while conducting this study:

Cross-sectional Design: The design of the study being cross-sectional hinders the ability to draw causal conclusions. The observed lower wellbeing scores among users may indicate selection effects instead of the repercussions of utilizing dating applications. Longitudinal studies that monitor wellbeing prior to and following the adoption of the app would offer more compelling evidence regarding causation.

Sample Size and Composition: The limited sample size (N=80) diminishes both statistical power and the ability to generalize findings. Subsequent research should utilize larger, more representative samples that encompass different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and geographical locations.

Lack of Usage Pattern Data: The research categorized participants simply as users or non-users without exploring patterns of usage, frequency, or underlying motivations. Future investigations should distinguish between casual and heavy users, in addition to examining varied motivations for usage (e. g. , pursuing long-term relationships versus seeking casual encounters).

Self-Report Measures: The study depended on self-reported information, which may be influenced by social desirability bias. Employing multifaceted approaches that integrate objective metrics (e. g. , actual usage statistics) could yield more reliable results.

7. CONCLUSION

The extensive investigation conducted among those who are user and non- user of online dating applications reveals many important psychological correlates, as well as some significant ones about how people feel about each other. These discoveries reveal significant disparities among these populations, providing valuable information about how online dating may impact psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment.

The statistics imply that users of online dating apps have lower scores than non-users, with higher scores across all measured domains of psychological wellbeing. Statistically significant differences in autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations (including self-acceptance), purpose in life and personal growth were confirmed by independent samples t-tests, with the latter finding greater significance. People who are online dating applications non-users may experience greater psychological benefits in regards to self-determination, enhancing the quality of relationships, providing meaningful experiences for others, and improving their self image.

Interpersonal commitment was also significantly higher among non-users, with family commitment being almost statistically significant. The outcomes suggest that online dating may have a connection to reduced commitment in diverse relationships, potentially reflecting varying perspectives on interpersonal connections.

The results were more subtle when comparing genders. The sole area of gender distribution that showed a statistically significant difference was self-acceptance, where males scored significantly higher than females regardless of online dating usage. The investigation reveals a persistent gender gap in how people perceive and accept themselves, regardless of their involvement with dating apps.

Among the findings, the effects of online dating on one's gender were most striking. Significant relationships emerged for a combination of environmental knowledge and commitment to relationships, suggesting that online dating has distinct effects on males and females. Female users report higher levels of environmental proficiency than males, as per the descriptive statistics; however this is not true for non-users. Comparable to male users, female users demonstrated a significantly greater level of relationship commitment, while non-users showed the opposite trend.

Such interaction effects demonstrate how complex the impact of online dating can be, suggesting that its psychological and relational consequences may vary greatly by gender. Differences may be attributed to different reasons for using apps, unique experiences in digital spaces, or varying sociocultural expectations that impact how men and women interact with online dating.

However, this recurring pattern of higher scores in psychological wellbeing for non-users prompts questions about how online dating might affect psychological functioning. It is uncertain whether online dating has a negative impact on one's overall wellbeing, or whether it is linked to fewer prior indicators of well-being. Despite this, these results provide valuable empirical proof to ongoing debates about the psychological consequences of digitally driven romantic relationships.

Additional investigations are necessary to examine the connections between psychological outcomes and online dating by employing longitudinal design methods that can measure improvements in wellbeing prior to and following app usage. Also, exploring particular aspects of online dating experiences (such as reasons, factors that drive selection choices, and outcomes) could provide more comprehensive information about when such applications may be available to users in terms of their psychological and commitment health.

This research demonstrates significant variations between individuals who are users of online dating applications and those who are non-users on various aspects of psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment (including gender-based characteristics). The conclusions shed light on how modern technological intermediaries in relationship formation are connected to different aspects of psychological wellbeing and interpersonal commitment.

8. IMPLICATIONS

This study looked at how using online dating applications affects users compared to those who are non-users, and it brings up some important points for individuals, mental health experts, application developers, and society in general.

The findings show that people who use dating apps tend to have lower scores in mental health areas. This raises questions about how these apps may affect users' feelings of independence, control, relationships, purpose, and self-acceptance. Mental health professionals should think about how using dating apps might play a role when helping people dealing with feelings of low self-worth, comparing themselves to others, or satisfaction in their relationships.

There are also notable differences between men and women when it comes to experiences with online dating. For example, men might need support in feeling more in control of their environment, while women could benefit from help with self-acceptance. This suggests that advice on healthy online dating might need to look different depending on the user's gender.

The fact that dating app users scored lower in commitment to friends, partners, and family shows that using these apps might change how people view and value their relationships. Relationship counselors should think about how the mindset shaped by these apps could influence how clients commit to relationships and what they expect from them.

For those who create dating apps, there's a chance to develop features that could help reduce any negative feelings tied to using the platforms. This could include ways to promote genuine connections, focus less on appearances, and encourage more meaningful interactions rather than just quick swiping. Apps might also think about adding resources or check-ins for users who seem to be struggling with their mental health while using the app.

On a broader level, these results point to the need for education around digital literacy so users can understand how online dating might affect their mental health. Programs that educate people about using these apps wisely could help them engage with them more thoughtfully.

A big difference in self-acceptance between males and females, regardless of app usage, also shines a light on wider social issues affecting how females see themselves. This highlights the importance of addressing media portrayals, societal expectations, and cultural stories that can negatively influence female's self-image.

For anyone thinking about using dating apps or already using them, it's important to engage thoughtfully with these platforms. Regularly checking in with oneself about how using these apps affects mental health and relationships is key. Setting limits on usage and keeping a balance between online interactions and real-life connections can really help.

It's worth noting that these findings show connections rather than cause-and-effect relationships. The differences observed might stem from the types of people drawn to online dating rather than the apps causing those effects. This complexity should be considered when thinking about how to help those who use dating apps.

Finally, these results contribute to ongoing discussions about how technology is changing our fundamental experiences, like dating. As online dating becomes more common, figuring out how it links to mental health is crucial to making sure these tools help rather than hurt our ability to connect meaningfully with others.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking ahead, there are a few suggestions for upcoming research to help us get a better grasp of how using online dating apps affects people's mental health.

First off, it would be helpful to use long-term studies. Following people over time can clarify whether changes in their mental health are due to using dating apps or stem from things they already had going on. This way, we can see how well-being might change during different times of using the apps.

We also need to dig a little deeper into how people use these applications. Future studies should look at different groups, like casual users versus those who are more active, and the various reasons people join, whether they're looking for serious relationships or just casual fun. Plus, understanding how specific actions within the app—like swiping or messaging—relate to mental health can provide more detailed insights.

Since the study found differences based on gender, it's important to look more closely at those distinct experiences. Talking to males and females about their personal experiences could shed light on how online dating affects their sense of control and commitment in relationships in different ways.

Including a wider range of participants from various ages, backgrounds, orientations, and locations is also crucial. The impacts of online dating can differ a lot depending on these factors, and a more varied group would help us understand the findings better.

It would be useful to explore what influences the link between online dating and mental health. For example, looking at how things like sensitivity to rejection or social comparisons might play a part could offer valuable insights.

Using a mix of surveys and personal interviews would give a richer picture of how online dating and mental health relate. Hearing individual stories could help clarify how people see their experiences and how these affect their mental state and approach to relationships.

We should also examine what helps some users stay mentally well while facing the challenges of online dating. Finding out what supports them could help create guidelines for healthier use.

Lastly, running experiments on changes to app interfaces or how people use them could reveal what features lead to better mental health. Trying designs that focus on deeper connections instead of quick swipes could be one way to do this.

Collaboration among psychologists, tech designers, and others can lead to fresh research questions and practical insights, making future studies more impactful.

Finally, looking at the positive effects of using dating apps, like building social confidence or broadening social circles, could give us a better overall view of how these platforms affect people's lives and relationships.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION

Purpose of the Dissertation: This study is part of a postgraduate course in Applied Psychology at Sister Nivedita University. Its aim is to investigate the comparative study on users and non users of online dating apps about psychological well being and interpersonal commitment factors affecting young adults.

What You Will Be Asked to do in the Research: If you choose to participate, you will be asked to provide some information and complete a few questionnaires. There are no right or wrong answers; your responses will be used solely for research purposes.

Potential Risks or Discomforts: No potential risks or discomforts from your participation in this research work is foreseen.

Benefits of Participation: While you may not gain direct personal benefits from your involvement, your contributions will play a vital role in enhancing research and understanding in this field.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is completely voluntary. You have the option to skip any question or withdraw from the study at any time without facing any repercussions. Your choice to withdraw will not impact your relationship with the researcher.

Confidentiality: All information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name will not be included in any reports or publications unless you give explicit consent. The data you share will be securely stored, and only the researcher will have access to it. We will take every precaution to safeguard your privacy.

I consent to participate in the study

Signature of the participant – Signature of the participant –

Date - Date -

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION SCHEDULE

NAME:

AGE:

GENDER:

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION:

FAMILY SIZE:

FAMILY TYPE:

AREA OF RESIDENCE:

FATHER'S AGE:

FATHER'S OCCUPATION:

MOTHER'S AGE:

MOTHER'S OCCUPATION:

NO. OF SIBLINGS:

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED ONLINE DATING: YES/NO

IF YES, ARE YOU A REGULAR USER OF DATING APPS: YES/NO

PRESENCE OF ANY PHYSICAL ILLNESS: YES/NO

IF YES, SPECIFY:

PRESENCE OF ANY MENTAL ILLNESS: YES/NO

IF YES, SPECIFY:

APPENDIX C

Instructions: Here are 42 statements. Please indicate your degree of agreement (using a score ranging from 1-6) to the following statements where: **1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree** and **6 = Strongly Agree.** Please answer honestly based on how you feel right now, and remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Take your time, and let me know when you're finished.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	**Disagree (2)**	**Slightly Disagree (3)**	**Slightly Agree (4)**	**Agree (5)**	**Strongly Agree (6)**
1. I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.						
2. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.						
3. I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.						
4. Most people see me as loving and affectionate.						
5. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.						
6. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.						
7. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.						
8. The demands of everyday life often get me down.						
9. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.						
10. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.						
11. I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.						
12. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.						
13. I tend to worry about what other people think of me.						
14. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.						
15. When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years.						
16. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns.						
17. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.						

18. I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.						
19. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.						
20. I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.						
21. I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time						
22. I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends.						
23. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.						
24. I like most aspects of my personality.						
25. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.						
26. I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities						
27. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.						
28. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.						
29. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.						
30. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life						
31. It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.						
32. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.						
33. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.						
34. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.						
35. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them						
36. My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves.						
37. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.						

38. I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.						
39. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.						
40. I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me.						
41. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.						
42. When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am.						

APPENDIX D

Instructions: Here are 71 statements which are divided into three subscales Friendship **(20 items) ,** Family **(28 items),** and Relationship (23 items) respectively. Read each statement carefully. For each statement, give a tick with the response that best represents your opinion.

- **A score of 1 is given for Strongly Disagree**
- **A score of 2 is given for Disagree**
- **A score of 3 is given for Neutral**
- **A score of 4 is given for Agree**
- **A score of 5 is given for Strongly Agree**

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1. Private matters shouldn't be discussed with friends.					
2. I do not feel emotionally connected to my friends.					
3. Friends can only be depended on during good times than in bad times.					
4. I help my friend who is in crisis.					
5. I feel proud of my friends' achievements.					
6. I tend to have casual friends rather than very close friends.					
7. I am afraid to share my deepest thoughts and feelings with friends.					
8. I share most of my feelings and emotions with my friends.					
9. I am not comfortable with long-distance friendships.					
10. I don't feel obliged to share the responsibilities of a friend.					
11. I treasure the memories with my friends.					
12. I believe that friends help us see our flaws and strengths without passing judgment.					
13. I find time to communicate with my friends.					
14. Compromises and adjustments are a necessary part of friendships.					
15. I know what my friends want.					
16. I do not allow my friends to feel lonely.					

17. I give my friends more time and attention than what I receive.					
18. I am emotionally attached to my friendships.					
19. I usually wait for my friends.					
20. I never encourage/ support friends in undesirable activities.					

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1. I have a strong bond with my Siblings.					
2. I'm always open to taking my family's advice regarding any issue.					
3. My family does not have my back when I need them.					
4. I don't have any issues with sharing my concerns with my family.					
5. I have always been there for my family in their time of need.					
6. I feel proud that I am a part of my family.					
7. I enjoy spending quality time with my family.					
8. I am on good terms with my parents.					
9. Will take efforts not to disconnect from family.					
10. I try to correct mistakes put forth by my family.					
11. I care for my parents' intentions.					
12. I ensure to spend enough time listening/ conversing with my parents.					
13. I make efforts to say my viewpoint and convince my parents.					
14. I will remember the smallest details of my parents.					
15. My family can recognize my friends.					
16. I try to fulfill my parent's needs without them asking me.					
17. I don't make my parents remind me of my daily chores.					
18. I balance my communication with parents/ family and my time on the internet.					
19. I accept my parent's efforts to correct me.					
20. I regularly communicate with my parents.					
21. I share many details of my life with my parents.					
22. I engage in conversations on many topics with my parents/family.					
23. I'm comfortable discussing my point of view with my family.					
24. I often make efforts to convince my parents before I make an opinion of their statement.					
25. I sustain my parent's assertiveness toward me.					
26. My family is a major part of my identity today.					
27. I would not do anything that puts my family in an embarrassing situation.					
28. I behave as if my every move impacts my family.					

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1. I share an emotional attachment with a special someone.					
2. I take time out of my schedule to spend dedicated time with a special someone.					
3. I am always there for my special someone when in time of need and joy.					
4. When I am unable to make it to an event with a special someone, I make it a priority to reschedule very soon.					
5. I assure I'm there for my special someone in a time of need and joy.					
6. I am comfortable appreciating and praising a special someone in public.					
7. I find it difficult to enjoy time with a special someone.					
8. I plan out outings and events, keeping in mind a special someone's interests and likings.					
9. I communicate my feelings and emotions to a special someone every day.					
10. I emphasize addressing misunderstandings and arguments with special someone.					
11. I ensure that planned events with a special someone takes priority.					
12. Important decisions are taken after discussing them with a special someone.					
13. I can be emotionally vulnerable with a special someone.					
14. I constantly question the special someone's dedication, investment, and feelings towards me.					
15. I celebrate a special someone's victories and aid them through their failure.					
16. I will give my best efforts for a lasting relationship.					
17. I will not be in a disagreeing mode with a special someone.					
18. I'm open to a desirable amount of communication between myself and a special someone.					

19. My special someone is part of my vision for the future.					
20. The special someone and I always agree in the end.					
21. My life will be disturbed if I leave my special someone.					
22. My relationship is by necessity as much as my desire.					
23. I will respect the special someone's emotions.					